

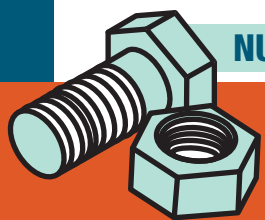


# 2015 Annual Report



Missouri's state park system, which is consistently rated one of the top four state park systems in the nation, contains 88 state parks and historic sites. The system includes homes of famous Missourians, Civil War battlefields and reminders of yesterday such as gristmills and covered bridges. The state's most outstanding landscapes are preserved for everyone's enjoyment – deep woodlands, glades, prairies and blue streams and lakes.

The mission of the state park system is to preserve and interpret the state's most outstanding natural landscapes and cultural landmarks, and to provide recreational opportunities compatible with those resources. Missouri State Parks is a division of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources.



## NUTS AND BOLTS

**2,000**  
structures

**3,500**  
lodging units

**312**  
lodging units

More than  
**1,000**  
miles of trail

Nearly  
**2,000**  
picnic sites

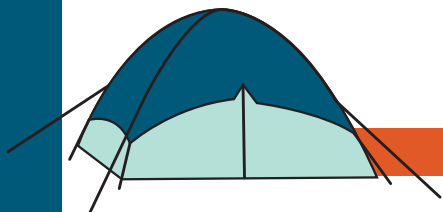
## FUNDING



Approximately **75%** of the budget to operate and improve parks is provided by the Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax.

**\$7** a year is the average per Missourian for the portion of the tax that support state parks.

The Parks, Soils and Water Sales Tax is placed on the ballot every 10 years. It is set to expire if not renewed by voters in 2016.



## SPENDING THE NIGHT

**72,976** camping and park-run  
lodging reservations

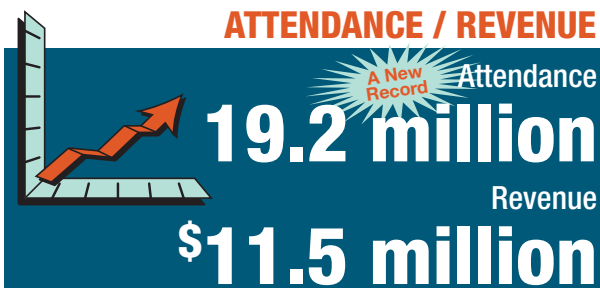
**12%** increase in reservations

**5.55%** increase in camping occupancy

**19.5%** increase in lodging occupancy

**26%**  
of campers  
were under 18

## ATTENDANCE / REVENUE



## USER FEEDBACK

**9** Certificates of Excellence by  
TripAdvisor based on traveler reviews

**96%** approval rating from guests

**FEEDBACK**

## MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXPLORE

**147,825** total acreage in 2014

**152,087** total acreage in 2015



## EXPERIENCING NATURE AND HISTORY

**1.8 million** interpretive contacts

Nearly **52,000** programs presented



## STAYING CONNECTED



**1.8 million**  
visitors to mostateparks.com

More than **43,000**  
followers to Facebook.com/mostateparks

**28** individual park and site  
Facebook pages maintained

Nearly **6,000** followers to @mostateparks



## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



More than **750**  
State Parks Youth Corps workers

More than **3,200** volunteers contributed  
**218,792** hours



## KATY TRAIL CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

In 2015, Missouri State Parks commemorated the 25th anniversary of Katy Trail State Park, the longest completed rail-trail conversion in the nation. The trail is built on the former Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad, which ceased operations in 1986. The first section of Katy Trail was dedicated on April 28, 1990 at Rocheport. The trail runs between Machens and Clinton, a distance of approximately 240 miles. Today, nearly 400,000 visitors use the trail each year and a 2012 economic impact study found that Katy Trail-related expenditures made by trail users generate almost \$18.5 million annually.



In September, Gov. Jay Nixon announced that by the end of 2016, Missouri State Parks expects to complete the extension of the Katy Trail from Windsor to Pleasant Hill along the Rock Island Trail State Park. The 47.5-mile-long extension will allow hikers and bicyclists greater access from the Kansas City region to the Katy Trail.

## MISSOURI STATE PARK RANGER EARNS NATIONAL PARK RANGER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Corp. Brandon Bartz of the Missouri State Park Rangers was named 2015 Park Ranger of the Year by ServiceWear Apparel. The national award is presented each year to honor a park ranger who goes above and beyond in service. The company selects the nominees based on submissions and the public votes online for the winner.

Cpl. Bartz was nominated for his actions at Castlewood State Park after a guest jumped from a cliff and became stuck 140 feet from the ground. Cpl. Bartz climbed up the rock face to reach the victim. Supported only by a small tree, he spent more than two hours with the victim, administering aid and offering encouragement and comfort, before being extricated to safety.

## 1,000<sup>TH</sup> MILE OF TRAIL AT HARRY S TRUMAN STATE PARK

In October, the park system opened the 1000th Mile Trail at Harry S Truman State Park. The 1-mile loop trail, open to day-use hikers, was built primarily by park staff and will feature the interpretation of ongoing glade restoration.

With the trail's opening, the state park system officially includes 1,000 miles of trail. In 2013, Missouri was named the Best Trails State by American Trails, a national, nonprofit organization working on behalf of the nation's hiking, biking and riding trails.



## "THE BATTLE OF ISLAND MOUND" WINS TWO EMMY AWARDS FROM NATAS MID-AMERICAN CHAPTER

"The Battle of Island Mound," a film based on the history of Battle of Island Mound State Historic Site near Butler, won two Emmy Awards at the 2015 Mid-America Emmy Awards Oct. 3, in St. Louis. The film was a collaborative effort between Missouri State Parks and St. Louis-based filmmaker Brant Hadfield. Awards were received for Best Historical Documentary and in recognition of the film's cinematography.

## PUBLIC TOURS AT MISSOURI'S NEWEST STATE PARK

In August, Missouri State Parks hosted a tour of Echo Bluff State Park, the park system's newest property. Scheduled to open summer of 2016, the new park will feature:

- An iconic lodge featuring 20 rooms, indoor and outdoor dining, meeting room space, and indoor and outdoor special event opportunities.
- Nine cabins of various sizes with full amenities.
- 60 full-service camping sites with electrical and water, 43 of which also have sewer service.
- Walk-in and special use camping areas.
- A bluff-top event shelter that can accommodate 200 people for special events.
- An amphitheater with a 50-guest capacity with tiered seating and a dramatic natural backdrop.
- A signature vehicular and pedestrian bridge over Sinking Creek.



## DOG PARK OPENS AT WESTON BEND STATE PARK

Missouri State Parks opened the Weston Bend State Park off-leash dog park in May at Weston Bend State Park near Weston. The new dog park is approximately one acre in size and is divided into three sections based on the sizes of dogs. It is the first off-leash dog park in the state park system.

## NEW AMENITIES FOR BICYCLISTS AT FINGER LAKES STATE PARK

Guests at Finger Lakes State Park can enjoy a new bicycle pump track and skills course. Dedicated in April, the new amenities are located at the Kelley Branch Mountain Bike Trailhead.

The pump track is an 87-foot, concrete track that allows bicyclists to speed around an oval ring and over eight bumps or "pumps" to increase speed to take on the banked curves at each end of the track. The new 12-piece skills course is designed to help mountain bikers of all levels perfect their skills for mountain biking trails.



**On the Cover:** In May, Gov. Jay Nixon hosted the Governor's Capitol Campout, which provided 24 Missouri families the opportunity to enjoy a weekend of outdoor adventures and sleeping under the stars at the Jefferson City Capitol Complex. Those participating in the overnight campout enjoyed activities occurring during Bass Pro Shops Outdoor Days at the Capitol and got hands-on experience with the camping equipment supplied by Coleman Inc. and Bass Pro Shops.

In October, Gov. Nixon was recognized for his commitment to conservation and the outdoors as the recipient of the 2015 Sheldon Coleman Great Outdoors Award from the American Recreation Coalition (ARC), the outdoor recreation community's most prestigious award. In presenting the award, ARC recognized the Governor's successful efforts throughout his career to enhance opportunities for outdoor recreation.



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